



A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

Welsh Language.





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ON THE

Welsh Language,

Pointing out it's

ANTIQUITY, COPIOUSNESS,

GRAMMATICAL PERFECTION,

WITH

REMARKS on it's POETRY;

AND

Other Articles not foreign to the Subject.

By J O H N W A L T E R S,

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----- *Antiquam exquirite Matrem.*

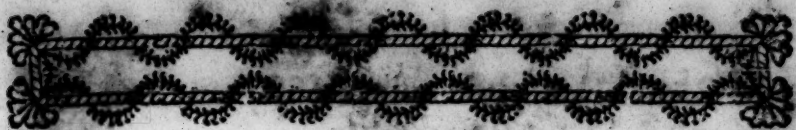
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WELSH LANGUAGE.



ESCIRE quid antequam natus sis acciderit, id est, *semper esse puerum*, says *Cicero*; and it is a saying that, if duly attended to, and suffered to have it's natural influence upon the mind, it will awaken a man's curiosity, and spur him on in his researches into Antiquity, while either History leads the way, or probable Conjecture lends it's friendly clew.

And since we find that the way to *things* is generally by *words*, our first object in the pursuit ought to be the acquisition of Language, which to *Britons* especially must be the *ancient British* or *Welsh*, as being not only the original Language of this Island, but also the oldest, or, at least, one of the oldest living Languages in the World. But lest what I have thus cursorily
advanced

advanced should be contested by any one, or be looked upon as a groundless assertion, I shall proceed by regular steps to investigate the Antiquity of the *Cambro-British* or *Welsh* Language, and not absurdly expect that an *Ipse dixit* should any where pass for a proof or demonstration. And the first step in this Investigation shall be a critical enquiry into the Etymology of the term, name or appellation, whereby this Language is expressed or denoted, *first*, by it's original Proprietors the *Cambro-Britons*; and, *secondly*, by the *English* at this day, as transmitted to them from their *Saxon* Ancestors.

The Ancient Britons, *viz.* the Natives of *Wales*, call their Language *Cymra-eg*, i. e. the Language of the *Cymry*. Now *Cymry*, or (as it ought to be written according to the most approved Orthography) *Cymmry* is the plural of *Cymmro*, a word compounded of the *Cambro-British* *Cyn* (signifying, first, primitive, original, &c.) and *Bro* (i. e. a region or country). And lest any one should think this a forced derivation on account of the change of the letters *n-b* into *m-m*, let it be observed that, according to the genius of

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of this Language, *Cyn* in composition changes it's *n* into the Liquid of the word following; thus, *Cymmru* (the original matrix or producer, i. e. native country) from *Cyn* and *Bru*; *Cym-mrodorion* (the Aborigines or first inhabitants of a country) from *Cyn* and *Brodorion*, sing. *Brodor*; &c.

Yet it must not be dissembled that *Cym-mru* might with (at least) equal propriety be written *Cyn-fru*; and *Cym-mrodorion*, *Cyn-frodorion* (the *f* in both being sounded like the *v* English); and probably the ancient pronunciation corresponded with this last mode of spelling: but what gave rise to this Orthography, that prevails at present, might be this; namely, that our Ancestors the *Cambro-Britons* made use of *m* and *b* promiscuously to express the modern sound of *f* Welsh, or *v* English, as hath been incontestably shewn by the learned and ingenious Mr. *Edward Llwyd* in his *Archæologia Britannica*, p. 226, and 228; so that those letters had then two sounds each allotted them, viz. their present universal sound, and that particular one above-mentioned. Thus, *Cym-mru*, it is
every

very probable, was originally written *Cyn-mru* or *Cyn-bru*, though pronounced as if written, according to the present mode of spelling, *Cyn-fru*; but when, by the improvement of Orthography, *m* and *b* came to be used only to express their modern, universal, and unvaried separate sounds, the *n* in *Cyn-* was changed, *Euphonia gratia*, into *m*, and *Cyn-mru* or *Cyn-bru* came to be spelt, as at present, *Cym-mru* (*Cym'ry*) or *Cymbru*, the traces of which last mode is not obscurely discovered in *Cambria* (the Latin name of *Wales*); in *Cumbria* (the Latin name of *Cumberland*), where a branch of the *Ancient Britons* maintain'd their ground, and were governed by Princes of their own 'till the 8th. Century; in *Cimbri*, the ancient inhabitants of *Jutland* and *Holstein*; in *Cantabria* (*Cynta-bru*), the country of the *Cantabri*, an ancient people of *Spain*, bordering on the bay of *Biscay*; &c.

Cym-mry then (or, as it is written at present, *Cym'ry*) can signify nothing else, at least in my opinion, but the *Aborigines* or *Indigenæ* (first inhabitants or natives) of a country; which meaning of the word seems to be implied, and alluded

ed to, in *Cæsar's* description of *Britain*, when he says ["*Britanniæ pars interior ab iis incolitur, quos natos in Insula ipsa, memoria proditum dicunt:*"] " The inner part of *Britain* is inhabited by such as are recorded by tradition to be originally produced in the Island."

If the above-given (which, I think, will admit of no dispute) be admitted as the true meaning of the word *Cym'ry*, the inference will be natural; namely, that *Cymra-eg* (the ancient British) is the aboriginal Language of this Island of *Great Britain*.

I now proceed to trace out the Etymology, and enquire into the signification, of the word *Welsh*, the term whereby the *English* of our days, as also their *Saxon* Ancestors did before them, express the *Cambro-British* Language.

Welsh is derived from *Wales*, and this again (if we believe an old story quoted by Sir *Henry Spelman*) from *Guala*, daughter to *Cadwaladr* the last king of the *Britains*, and wife to *Ina* king of the *Saxons*, who began his reign A. D. 689. No, says Dr. *Brady* (who quotes this story in order to confute it), "*Wales* never had it's name

from her, but from the *Saxon*, *Wealh*, which signifies a Stranger; and both the *Britains* and their language being strange to the *Saxons*, they called them *Wealhs*, or *Strangers*, &c."

The *Doctor*, it must be owned, hath sufficiently disauthorized the story of *Guala*, and, consequently, destroy'd the foundation of the Etymology of *Wales* founded there-upon; nor, indeed, did it require any uncommon abilities to discover the falsehood, and expose the futility of a Legend, that had in it so many evident marks of fiction. But let us examine whether he hath been equally successful in establishing what he hath thought proper to substitute in it's stead. Is it at all probable that the *Saxons* should be so little acquainted with,---should have so forgotten the *Britons*, by whom they had at first been called in as auxiliaries, and with whom they had afterwards had daily struggles for victory and empire for Centuries together;---- is it at all probable, I say, that the *Saxons* should have so forgotten them after all this, as to call them Strangers in their own country? as to call them aliens, as it were, in their own houses?---It cannot

not be. It is true, Dr. *Brady* is not singular in his Derivation of *Wales*; for the learned *Wotton* hath, in effect, advanced the same doctrine. His words are these --- “ *Populus hic, cujus leges exhibemus, seipsos Wallos nunquam appellabant. Cambros (Cymry) se ab omni memoria vocabant et etiamnum vocant. Lingua sua Cymraeg (Cambrica) ab incolis appellatur. Nos Seison (Saxones) vocant, et Linguam Anglicanam Seisneg (Saxoniam). Angli illos Wyllisce (Wallos) i. e. Peregrinos vocabant ab Inæ regis temporibus ad nostra usque sæcula; seque ipsos indigenas regionis suæ fuisse existimabant, postquam Britannos veteres in regionem, quæ a nobis Wallia vocatur, detrusissent.*” In English thus---- “This People, whose laws we offer to public view, never call’d themselves *Welsh*. They always did, and still do, call themselves *Cymry*. Their language the inhabitants stile *Cymraeg*. They call us *Seison* (Saxons), and the English Tongue *Seisneg* (the Saxon). The *English* ever since the time of king *Ina* have called them *Wyllisce* (*Welsh*) i. e. Strangers; and reckoned themselves the natives of their country, after they drove the ancient Britons into the country, which is by us called *Wales*. ”

Yet neither of these learned men were the original Authors of this etymological stroke of Criticism, for we find Sir *Ed. Coke*, in his *Comment upon Littleton*, displaying his skill in Etymology as follows; --- "*Wallia* cometh of the Saxon word *Wealh*, which signifieth *Peregrinus* or *Ex-terus*, for the Saxons so called them; because, in troth, they were Strangers to them; being the remains of the old and ancient *Britains*, a wise and warlike Nation, &c."

When an Author of note happens to advance any thing plausible and specious upon an intricate subject, we may often observe the same supinely copied even by the *learned* and *ingenious*; and thus suffered to pass unexamined, without either doubt or contradiction for years, nay sometimes for ages; 'till some hardy Critic arises, who, distaining servilely to tread in the steps of others, and to be led blind-fold in the trammels of Authority, examines with his own eyes every step he takes, and at last discovers, and daringly strikes out into a new and better path; then every body is amazed at it's not having been discovered sooner. And with this,
and

and no other remark I was once more than half-resolved to dismiss the Great Names quoted above. But it occurring to me at the very instant that the celebrated *Taliesin* hath *Wallia* in a Poem of a prophetic cast, written about 150 years before the beginning of the reign of king *Ina*, I could not prevail with myself not to insert the Passage :

Eu Ner a folant,

Eu hiaith a gadwant,

Eu tir a gollant,

Ond gwyllt *Wallia*.

Thus translated into *Latin* by Dr. *Davies*.

Usque laudabunt Dominum creantem,

Usque servabunt idioma linguæ,

Arvaque amittent sua cuncta, præter

Wallica rura.

And thus paraphrastically attempted in *English*

by *J. W.*

Still shall they chant their great Creator's praise;

Still, still retain their language and their lays;

But nought preserve of all their wide domains,

Save *Wallia's* wild uncultivated plains.

Hence,

Hence, I presume, it is evident that *Wales* (in Latin, *Wallia*) was not so named from *Guala*; for it is not pretended that she was born 'till many years after this Poem was written. Nor is it less clear that it is not derived from *Wealh* (a Stranger); for, not to insist upon what *Verstegan* says, namely, that *Fremetling* in the old *Saxon* tongue is the only word for *Stranger*; not to insist upon this, I say, it is entirely incredible that the *Saxons* should become so totally unacquainted with the *Britons* in the space of 90 years, as to have no other name but *Strangers* to express them by, though they had fought under their banners, and received pay from them for the *first ten* of the *ninety*; and, after they had projected the design of becoming their masters, had been obliged to measure swords with them every day.

Having advanced thus far in sapping the foundation of the air-built opinions of others, I shall now proceed to establish my own; nor is it, I confess, altogether my own, for *Verstegan* and *Rapin* have espoused the same in substance before. And it is this, ---- That *Wallia*

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is derived from *Gallia*, and the English *Wales* from the French *Galles* or *Gauls* (a people or nation of the ancient *Celtæ* called by the Romans *Galli*); that the Saxons gave the Britons the name of *Wallish* or *Wallis* (by contraction *Walsh* or *Welsh*), i. e. *Gauls*, judging them to be of *Gaulish* extraction; that *Wallish* is the Saxon or German mode of writing and pronouncing *Gaulish* or *Gallish* (in French *Gaulois*) by changing the *G* and *Gu* of the French (and Latin) into *W*, which is commonly done, as may be observed in *War* (anciently *Warre*) for the French *Guerre*, *Ward* for *Garde*, *Wardain* (now *Warden*) for *Gardien*, &c; and it is well known that French authors express our *Wales* by *Gaules*, and *Cornwal* (*Cornwales*) by *Cornugaules*. Whence, I think, it may be fairly inferred that *Wallish* and *Gallish*, otherwise *Gaules* and *Walles*, have one and the same signification: and that the ancient inhabitants of this Island were originally the same people with those of ancient *Gaul* (now *France*); which seems to be sufficiently confirmed by *Cæsar* in his *Commentaries*, where we are told that the *Britons* and *Gauls* differed not much in their *manners* and *customs*; but more expressly by *Tacitus* in his

his *Life of Agricola*, who tells us that the two nations differed not much in their *Language*. This difference consisted in dialect only, I suppose; and this, probably, was no more than what there is at this day between the dialects of *North-Wales* and *South-Wales*.

It is evident from the critical observations of our learned *Camden*, and of the great *Bochart* among the French, that the most ancient names of *cities, towns, rivers, mountains, &c.* in several parts of France, and every where in Great-Britain, are naturally, and without the least straining, resolved or analyzed into *Cambro-British* (i. e. *Welsh*) etymons that are admirably expressive of the reason of the appellation; which to me is a conclusive argument that they received their names from this Language. For instance: *Uxellodunum* (a town of *Guyenne* in *France*), from the *Celtic* or *Ancient British* *Uchel* i. e. *High*, and *Din* or *dun* i. e. *a city or town*; and the situation of the town, which is upon an eminence, affords the strongest presumption that the given etymology is the true one. *Ax-clodunum* (now *Hexham* in *Northumberland*) seems to have the same derivation,

Maridunum

Maridunum, or (as it is found in some copies of *Antonine's Itinerary*) *Muridunum* (in *Welsh* *Myrddin*) is derived from *Myr* and *Din*, q. d. *Sea-ton*. *Cebennæ* (high-ridged mountains in *France*, now *Cevennes*), from the *Cambro-British*, *Cefn* (pl. *cefnau*), the ridge of a mountain. *Arar* (a river of *France*, now *la Saone*), from the *Cambro-British*, *Araf*, Slow; and nothing can be more expressive of it's property, for it's course is so slow that it can hardly be discerned; which hath given it the epithets, *lentus*, *segnis*, *pigerrimus*, *dubitans quo cursus agat*, &c. which we meet with in reading the *Latin* poets. Let these few suffice at present; though, if it was necessary, a great many similar examples might be produced.

I flatter myself that enough hath been say'd to convince all that are open to conviction, that the ancient *British* language (now called *Welsh*) was one and the same in the main with that of ancient *Gaul*, now *France*. My Business now shall be to trace it higher still; and that may be easily done, if the extensive learning and critical sagacity of Bishop *Walton*, who quotes *Box-*

hornius for his authority, will be allowed to have sufficient weight, and to be decisive in the dispute. Writing of languages in his *Proleg. in Bibl. Polyglot.* I. S. 14. the Bishop hath these words, *Quædam tamen inter linguas nobis cognitæ quasi cardinales, e quibus multæ aliæ pullularunt, a doctis recensentur ; --- Tartarica quæ longe per Septentrionem vagatur, ad quam multæ Europæorum et Asiaticorum linguæ antiquæ referendæ, si Boxhornio credendum, ut antiqua Gallica, et Britannica, cujus reliquæ adhuc in Wallia manent."*

Which may be Englished thus ; --- " Some however of the languages that we are acquainted with are reckoned by the learned as *cardinal*, out of which many others are sprung ; for instance, the *Tartarian* which is of vast extent in the North, to which many of the ancient languages of *Europe* and *Asia* are to be referred, if we may believe *Boxhornius*, as the ancient *Gaulish*, and the *British*, the remains of which are still extant in *Wales*." But I am by no means disposed to acquiesce in any thing vague and indeterminate upon the point, and therefore shall proceed in the pursuit 'till I meet with something explicit and conclusive. It would be an
argument

argument of insensibility to the merit, as well as ingratitude to the memory, of that Oracle of the British language the learned Dr. *Davies*, not to pay a respectful attention to his sentiments on this article. And they are these, as delivered by him in his *Ad Lectorem Præfatio* before his Dictionary: --- “*Nos nostram inter matrices Europæ linguas, multis suffragantibus, refragante nemine, numeramus; longe antiquissimam esse dicimus, ut et Camdenus; Aboriginum hujus Insulæ linguam fuisse non dubitamus, &c.*” Englished as follows, “Our language we reckon among the mother-tongues of *Europe*, having many suffrages for this our opinion, without a single one against it; we affirm it to be *by far the most ancient*, as *Camden* also does; we make no doubt of it’s having been the language of the first inhabitants of this Island, &c.” Here we may observe, that Dr. *Davies* pretends not to any further discovery, than that the *ancient British* language belonged to the class of European mother-tongues. But *Aristarchus non videt omnia*. The great Luminaries, that have since shined upon the antiquarian world, were not then risen. *Llwyd* and *Pezron*, those Prodigies

of *Celtic* knowledge, and Boast of *British* Antiquaries, had not then appeared on the stage of Literature. The *former* of these, by his *Comparative Etymology* which makes a part of his celebrated *Archæologia Britannica*, hath pointed out a method of, and laid down very easy rules for, reducing all the ancient and modern tongues of Europe to one general source and common origin. The *latter*, in his *Antiquite de la Langue et de la Nation de Celtes*, hath proved, by his amazing skill in languages and history, that this *common origin* of the European tongues, was no other than the *ancient Celtic*; and that again derived from the *Gomarian* and *Iaonian* or *Ionic*, the languages of *Gomer* and *Javan* the sons of *Japhet* after the confusion at *Babel*: that the *Celtic* was the language of the *Titans*, a great and warlike nation, who spread themselves not only over all the *Lower Asia*, but also over the greatest part of *Europe*, and under the conduct of their princes, *Acmon*, *Uranus*, *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Mars*, &c. erected a vast empire, and made their language universal; of which language the *Greek*, *Latin*, *Teutonic*, *Gaulish*, *British*, *Irish*, &c. are but different

ferent dialects, somewhat disguised and altered by mutual intermixtures, by the different pronunciation of different countries, and the polishing and refinement of Grammarians. In the course of his researches, this learned *Armorican* has given the etymologies of *proper names*, of *rivers*, *towns*, *mountains*, &c. in the countries over which the *Titan* empire extended itself, as also *those* formerly inhabited by the *Gauls*, the descendants of the *Titans*. And these, most of them at least, so naturally resolve themselves into *Celtic*, i. e. *British*, etymons, that they seem to me to carry conviction along with them that they are derived from that alone, and from no other language.

Tho' the Authorities already produced will, probably, be thought by all those, whose opinion a writer on the subject ought to regard, amply sufficient to establish the point in hand; yet there is one still behind, *qui unus instar est omnium*; --- who, if all the rest were entirely lost, might alone supply their place with advantage; and this is the exquisitely learned and amazingly industrious *M. Bullet*, who, in his *Memoirs sur*
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la langue Celtique, “appears to have made some progress, as a professed Critic expresses it, in all the languages of the earth.” This Gentleman has run in the same course with his countryman the learned *Pezron*, but has out-stript him in the race, and advanced so far beyond him as to make the *Celtic* to be a dialect of the original language communicated by the Creator to the first Parents of mankind. And admitting the primitive language to have been the *Hebrew*, which, I fancy, very few will dispute, he is not singular in his opinion ; for a very learned person of our own Nation, in his *Enquiries concerning the first Inhabitants, Language, &c. of Europe*, published about the same time, supposes the *Celtic* a sister-dialect of the *Hebrew*. Here also co-incides in effect what *Dr. Davies* hath advanced on this head, whose words are, “*Mihi, si sensu meo abundare permittor, ab omnibus Europæis et Occidentalibus linguis, saltem quales nunc et multis retro seculis fuerunt, alienior esse videtur, quam ut ab illis derivari posse vel somnietur. Eorumque arridet sententia qui Babele natam existimant. Orientalium matricum unam esse opinor, aut certe ab Orientalibus immediate prognatam.*”

tam. Pro qua licet opinione ut pro aris et focis dimicare nolim, ausim affirmare, Linguam Britannicum tum vocibus, tum phrasibus et orationis contextu, tum literarum pronuntiatione, manifestam cum Orientalibus habere congruentiam et affinitatem.” ---In English, “ This language (i. e. the British) seems to me, if I am allowed to have any judgment of my own, to be of a genius so different from all the European and Western languages, at least such as they are at present and have been for many ages past, that there is not even the slenderest foundation for thinking it might be derived from them. And I am best pleased with their sentiment, who *deem it to have taken it's rise from Babel.* It is my opinion that it is one of the Oriental mother-tongues, or at least immediately sprung from these. For which my way of thinking tho' I would not contend as if life and fortune depended upon it, yet I may venture to affirm that the *British* tongue hath an evident agreement and affinity with the *Oriental* languages in it's words, phrases, composition or structure, and pronuntiation of it's letters. ”

Whosoever well examines the character of
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the last-quoted Author, will be apt to lay no small stress on his determination, as being one who was in every respect qualified to judge on the point. The learned *Nicolson* in his *Historical Library*, under the Article *Dictionaries*, expressly pronounces Dr. *Davies's* to be "a book which shews it's excellent author to have been perfectly acquainted with all the learned languages, as well as his own mother-tongue." And the industrious *Wood*, in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, gives us his character in these words ; --- "He was esteemed well versed in the history and antiquities of his own nation, well versed in the *Greek* and *Hebrew* languages, a most exact critic, and an indefatigable person, and well acquainted with curious and rare authors." Thus qualified, he spent at least between forty and fifty years of his life in studying the language of his country, in consequence of which he rendered himself a perfect master of the ancient *British*, and had no inconsiderable share in translating the *Holy Scriptures* into it ; as may be gathered from his *Prefaces* to his *Grammar* and *Dictionary*, collated with their different *Dates*. And it may be justly say'd of him as was
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also say'd of *Dryden*, that if he had written nothing but his *Prefaces*, these alone would have been sufficient to have acquired him a great name.

Though it may be thought, by this time, to be unnecessary for the elucidation of the subject ; yet I can by no means prevail with myself not to mention the ingenious *Rowlands* on the occasion, who, in his *Comparative table of languages*, hath paralleled 300 *Hebrew* words with an equal number taken from the ancient languages of *Europe*, corresponding therewith both in sound and signification, so as to evince an affinity and near resemblance between them. And having remarked that, of these 300 *Hebrew* words, more than half that number answer our present *British* or *Welsh* sounds, as near as can be expected at so remote a distance both of time and place, he very naturally concludes, " That the *British* tongue, having more of that *original* language in it than all the rest together, may merit the esteem of being reckoned the *most ancient*, and *least corrupted*, language in this western part of the world."

Considering the narrowness of the limits I had, at my first setting out, prescribed to myself, I find I have been already rather prolix than otherwise on this head ; and, therefore, would fain dismiss it, but cannot perceive how I can do this with so good a grace, and so much to my reader's satisfaction as to leave him engag'd with the learned *Holloway*, who will not fail to entertain him with abundance of *British* words naturally derived from *Hebrew Originals* ; nor doth he ever seem to be so well pleased, as when he is thus employ'd. His general method is, *first* to derive a *British* root or primitive from a *Hebrew* one; *then*, to trace it in it's derivatives; and *lastly*, to consider it's metaphorical acceptations. And being struck with the naturalness and facility of the derivation, and the affinity of both sound and sense, he sometimes concludes thus ; “ This, by the way, shews the great *antiquity* of the *British* language, with it's wonderful simplicity, and close dependence on the *Hebrew*, of which, examples in vast numbers might be given. Sometimes thus ; - - - “ Perhaps no derived Language can shew the like agreement
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with the *original*." And sometimes, in the strains of admiration, thus ; " With what pleasure and advantage might persons learned in *this* language (i.e. the *ancient British*) read the *Hebrew* ! "

Let this suffice to shew the *Antiquity* of the *Cambro-British* language ; it's *Copiousness* comes next in course to be considered.

Nothing can be more derogatory to a language than a paucity of words, and a scantiness of expressions. The most vigorous parts must soon flag under such restraints, and the liveliest Genius grow tame and languid under such perpetual checks. A prose-writer in such a language will labour under an inconveniency analogous to that of a man walking in fetters ; and the poet in it may not unaptly be compared to a wretch attempting to run loaded with double-irons. The ancient *English*, or more properly the *Anglo-Saxon* language, seems to have been originally very scanty ; and this we may infer from the necessity it was under of borrowing from others, where-withal to supply it's own deficiencies. The *English* language indeed, as

it appears in it's modern garb, discovers nothing of it's original meanness and pristine nakedness ; so far from this, that it exhibits at present a very specious figure ; but it hath learned the art to make itself thus fine with the spoils of other languages, i. e. of the *Greek, Latin, Italian, French, &c* ; and if each of these was to resume it's own, proud Master *English* would be much in the same predicament with the Jackdaw in the Fable, which when the birds observed strutting about in feathers not his own, they all at once fall a pluming of him, and when each of them had resumed what originally belonged to himself, the cox-comb bird was reduced to his former shabbiness, and rendered a truly ridiculous object.

A language copious in it's words, and abounding in variety of expression, is the delight of the Orator, and is essential to the very existence of the Bard. It enables the former agreeably to vary his diction, and to round his periods to a charming degree of sweetness : the latter it enables ever to avoid a disgusting sameness

ness of versification, and to produce a melodious variety in his lines.

What hath been say'd of the *English* may, with very few exceptions, be affirmed of most of the modern languages of *Europe*; which however they may differ in other respects, agree in this, *namely*, That they borrow their *technical terms*, and names of the Sciences, from the *Greek*: and this is a proof of their native poverty and domestic scantiness.

But the *Cambro-British* or *Welsh* language is possessed of native ornaments, and unborrowed treasures. It rivals the celebrated *Greek* itself in it's aptitude to form the most beautiful *derivatives*; as well as in the elegance, facility and expressiveness of an infinite variety of *compounds*: but if we compare these languages in regard to *primitives*, especially those that are synonymous, the *Greek* with all it's boasted copiousness must here give way. The learned *Humphrey Prichard*, touching upon this point in his celebrated Preface to Dr. *J. D. Rhys's* Grammar, hath these words;-----“ *Lingua (sine dubio) derivationibus*

tionibus, compositionibus, vocum aptitudine, et sermonis venustate adeo dives, ut ad cujuslibet artis cognitionem exprimendam, facilius aut facilius nihil exoptari poterit." The substance whereof is as follows;----

" A language *this* (beyond all dispute) so abounding in derivatives, compounds, propriety of words, and beauty of expression, that for the purpose of communicating the knowledge of any art or science, nothing that was attended with greater facility, or more happily calculated, could possibly be wished for."

And the Great Dr. *Davies*, whose sentiments on the subject will not fail to engage the attention of the Learned, in his Preface to his Dictionary writes thus;--"*Composita in nostra lingua tam sunt numero infinita, ut ne Græca quidem in hac parte concedat copię tantopere jactatæ, quæ tamen in compositionibus ut plurimum sita est.*" In English; "The compounds in our language are so infinitely numerous, that in this respect it by no means falls short not even of the so much boasted copiousness of the Greek, which however lies mostly in it's compounds."

But

But what hath been here asserted, I shall proceed to explain and confirm by a few examples. *Horizon* is an Astronomical term of Greek extraction, and made use of to express *The circular line that limits the view and bounds the sight*. This term *Cicero* would fain Latinize; and the *Latin*, we must own, was by no means an inexpressive language, especially in the mouth of a *Cicero*; but *Finiens*, or *Orbis finiens*, is (in my humble opinion) flat and languid, when compared with the native energy of the original term *Horizon*. Here *Seneca* too would try his skill, but with no better, if with equal, success; for *Finitor* will be hardly thought to mend the matter. The *French*, probably out of a consciousness of the innate debility of their language, never attempted a translation of this term, but have always used it, without either mask or disguise, in it's primitive form. The *English* also have borrowed and retained the term without any transformation, whether it was from a fondness of copying after their good neighbours the *French*, or from what other motive, I will not take upon me to determine. But whether *Terfyn-gylch*, the *Cambro-British* term answering to

to the *Greek* be not equally expressive and conveys an idea equally distinct and nervous with *Horizon*, I shall not hesitate to submit to the determination of any one, that is but tolerably acquainted with both languages. From a kind of prefaging confidence of a decision in my favour, I was going to cry out, - - - *Ex uno discite omnes*; but upon recollection, I have reason to know that man-kind in general are more tenacious of their opinions, upon how slight so-ever a foundation they may at first have been entertained, than to suffer themselves to be beat out of them by a single argument, tho' ever so cogent and convincing. I therefore proceed in the business of exemplification. *Grammar* is a term borrowed from the *Greek*, and used with little variation by the *Latins*, *French*, *English*, &c; but the *Welsh* are under no necessity of borrowing from others while they have so significant a term of their own as *Llythyreg*. I might with equal propriety instance in the terms *Arithmetic*, *Astronomy*, *Logic*, *Musick*, &c; but who-ever will but take the pains to consult the *English-Welsh-Dictionary*, that is now a publishing in *Quarto* by

subscrip-

subscription, will be fully convinced of the truth of what is here advanced.

In respect of synonymous primitives the *Cambro-British* language is rivaled by few, but excelled by none, except it be the *Arabic*, which may be say'd to be *bewilderingly* copious ; for, if what we are told by some Authors be true, the *Arabians* have no fewer than a thousand words whereby to express a *Sword*, and three hundred that signify a *Lion*.

But the *Cambro-British* compounds and de-compounds have always been, and ever will be, the admiration of all that are acquainted with the language: for here we may observe *two, three, four, five*, and sometimes *six* words coalesce so naturally, through the change of initials, as to produce harmoniousness of sound, as well as expressiveness of sense. For instance, *Teulu* (rectius *ty-lu*) signifying a *Family*; compounded of *Ty* a house, and *Llu* a number of persons united together. *Tylwyth*, a *Family*; compounded of *Ty* a house, and *Llwyth* a tribe. *Cymmaethlu*, a family; compounded of *Cyd* together,

ther, *maeth* nourishment, and *llu* a band or company; *quasi dicas*, A company of persons boarding together. *Llathr-gein-dlos-fwyn* is an epithet for a fine woman, and it is compounded of *Llathr* bright, *cain* (fem. *gain*) fair, *tlws* (fem. *dlos*) beautiful i. e. in person, and *mwyn* (fem. *fwyn*) gentle i. e. in manners. *Gor-lathr-gein-deg-fwyn* is an epithet much of the same signification with the former, but heightened by the prepositive particle *Gor* i. e. very or exceeding. *Cym-mhleth-eur-grwydr-gein-dorch*, i. e.

Of many a braid of golden hue

The waving beauteous wreath, ---

Tho' these last compounds --- these *sesquipedalia verba* ---- have nothing rugged in their sound or structure, yet by these I would represent, not what usually *is*, but only what occasionally *may be*, done in this *copious* language.

I now proceed to consider it's *Grammatical Perfection*, and in order to this I shall lay before the reader the common or generally prevailing *Welsh* Alphabet, with the similar sound of each Character in a collateral column, *viz.*

Characters.

Characters. Pronounced.

A, as *A* English in *Man*; but when circumflexed, as in *Mane*.

B, as *B* English.

C, as *K* English, or *C* hard in *Can*, *Come*, &c; never soft, as in *Cease*, *City*, &c.

Ch, as *X* Greek properly pronounced, the English having no sound similar to it.

D, as *D* English.

Dd, as *Th* English, in *Then*, *They*, &c, i. e. soft; not hard, as in *Think*, *Third*, &c.

E, as *E* English in *Ten*, *Fen*, &c; but when circumflexed, as *Ea*, in *Bear*, *Rear*, &c.

F, as *V*, in *Very*, *Vile*, &c; or as *F* English in *Of* (ov).

Ff, as *F* English, in *Fan*, *Fight*, &c; or as *Ff* English, in *Off*.

G, as *G* English, in *Gain*, *Get*, *Gone*, &c, i. e. hard; never soft, as in *Gin*, *Gender*, &c.

H, as *H* English, in *Hand*, *House*, &c.

I, as *I* English, in *Hid*, *Bid*, *Rid*, &c; but when circumflexed, as *Ee*, in *Deed*, *Feed*, &c.

L, as *L* English.

Ll, is *L* strongly aspirated, and can be represented in English only by *Lh*, or *Llh*.

M, as *M* English.

N, as *N* English.

Ng, as *Ng* in the English words *Bring*, *King*,
Long, *Song*, &c.

O, as *O* English, in *Gone*; but when circumflexed, as *O*, in *Bone*.

P, as *P* English.

Ph, as *Ph* English, in *Physic*, *Philosophy*, &c.

R, as *R* English.

Rh, as *Rh* English, in *Rhetoric*, *Rheum*, &c.

S, as *S* English, in *Sense*, *Since*, &c.

T, as *T* English, in *Ton*, *Tun*, *Temper*, &c.

Th, as *Th* English, in *Thanks*, *Thick*, *Death*, &c;
but never as in *Then*, *They*, &c.

U, as *I* English, in *Bliss*, *Miss*, *This*; but if circumflexed, as *Ee* in *Green*, *Seen*, &c;
or rather something like *U* French, in *Un* or *Une*.

W, as *O* in the English particle *To*, or *Oo* in *Good*; but when circumflexed, as *oo* in *Boon*,
Moon, *Noon*, &c.

Y, in any syllable of a word, except the last, as *U* English in *Burn*, *Churn*, *Hunt*, &c; or as *i* in *Bird*, *First*, &c: but in the last syllable of a word (whether the word consist of

one or more syllables), as *i* English in *Birrh*, *Girth*, *Mirth*, *Sin*, &c ; or as *i* Latin in *Vis*, *Virtus*, &c ; except that in these Monosyllables, *Y*, *ydd*, *ym*, *yn*, *yr*, *ys*, *fy*, *dy*, *myn*, it retains it's former sound, i. e. of *U* English in *Burn*, *Churn*, &c. --- *N. B.* The both sounds of *Y* are represented nearly in the English word *Sundry* ; but more perfectly in the Latin word, *Nunquis* ; and entirely in the Welsh words, *Hynny*, *llythyr*, *mysyr*, *pybyr*, *ystyr*, &c. Let it also be noted, that the circumflexed *Y* hath one and the same sound with the circumflexed *U* ; yet, for etymological reasons, the one ought never to be used for the other.

I have been thus express and minute on the sounds of the *Letters*, as well knowing that whosoever is but well-informed in this article, must of course know to read the *Cambro-British* Language ; for in *this*, as well as in those celebrated Languages of *Greece* and *Rome*, every Character set down in a word is fully and distinctly pronounced in reading, so as to produce one uniform and unvaried sound. Here no written Character

racter is ever whimsically sunk in pronunciation, or forced to express a multiplicity of sounds, as in the *English*, the *French*, and other modern languages. Let any one but learn the Alphabet and the power of it's letters, and he shall need no further aid or assistance in the article of reading; for *then* the work is done, and the labour is over.

It must, however, be considered that it is impossible to read any language with propriety, without an acquaintance with it's *Accent*; but in the *Welsh* this is easily attainable; for all it's words (of what quality soever), consisting of more than one syllable, are accented on the *Penultima*, excepting *Verbs* ending in *au* and *oi*, together with contracted *Verbals* derived from the *former*, which have their *Ultima* circumflexed. So that with regard to *accentuation*, this our Language hath confessedly the advantage, not only over the *English*, but even over those *learned Languages* the *Greek* and *Latin*: for the rules of *accenting* in the *former* of these, i. e. the *Greek*, as being made to clash with, and, as it were, to fly in the face of the natural *Quantity* of syllables, are unnatural, perplex, and intricate

cate ; and in the *latter*, one ought to be well-skilled in it's *Profody* and laws of *Verfification* before he pretends to read with any degree of accuracy. But the native simplicity of our Language, in this point, never appears to equal advantage as when contrasted with the *English*, whose mode of Accent is at this day capriciously puzzling, as having of late been continually shifting with the veering Taste of the Times, which is as unsteady as a weather-cock : nor hath the celebrated * *Johnson* with all his literary abilities --- with Learning and Reason at his side, and Fame in his train --- been able to subdue the ever-changing *Proteus*, reduce him to, and fix him in, the natural shape. A young Fellow, whom Fortune hath stationed as a Reader in some place of eminence, and on whom Nature (to atone for his mental deficiencies) hath bestowed a melodious voice, will out of meer vanity, and an ostentatious desire of distinguishing himself, form the project of altering the prevailing mode of *Accentuation* and
of

* Dr. Samuel Johnson, Author of the English Dictionary, the Rambler, &c. &c.

of introducing a new one; and this he will have sufficient authority to effect by means of the above-mentioned advantage. This principle (i.e. a desire of being taken notice of) which is implanted in every human breast, for want of being properly directed and kept within due bounds, hurries men on to make themselves oftentimes ridiculous, and sometimes pernicious to Society. Actuated by *this* the Frenchman formerly came tripping a minuet down the middle isle or nave of *St. Peter's* at *Rome*, who being asked by his companion that stood amazed at his behaviour, what he meant by it, answered very jovially, "*On doit faire quelque chose pour se distinguer.*" And it was this same principle, that influenced *Erostratus* in ancient times to set the temple of *Diana* at *Ephesus* on fire. But from what cause or principle so-ever it may have sprung, it will evidently appear to the candid Critic and competent Judge in these matters, that the state of the English Accent at present is inconsistent with all *Analogy*, is in *some* cases dubious and uncertain; and in *others*, forced, affected and unnatural. If what is here asserted be void of foundation, and the charge

ground-

groundless, let any one but take the pains to refute it, his arguments shall be fairly weighed in the scale of Reason, and I solemnly promise not to preclude, but always to preserve my mind open to, conviction. I wish, and would greatly rejoice, to see every stain of affectation wiped off--- every brand of imperfection erased ---from a language so elegant and expressive, as the English is in it's present (in other respects) improved state. And why this may not be accomplished, reason there is none. It is a task easy in itself, since nothing more is requisite for the purpose than to lay down a few comprehensive well-digested rules, uniformly deduced from analogical principles, and to have these fixed as a standard by proper authority. Why should any foundation for so disgraceful a charge be suffered any longer to remain?

“ Pudet hæc opprobria nobis

“ Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.”

These scandals we with indignation hear,
And yet must own th' accus'd we cannot clear.

What hath been here say'd, with regard to
the English Language, may, if the Reader
F please

pleaseth, be considered as a kind of digression, and not intimately connected with the subject in hand.

That which hath most of the appearance of difficulty in the Welsh Language (especially to those that are strangers to, or but superficially acquainted with, it) is the *Variation* of these letters, viz. *b, c, d, g, ll, m, p, rh, t*, when they are *initial*, i. e. begin a word ; and which, from this their changing quality, or disposition to vary, are styled *mutable* or *convertible* Consonants. But this difficulty is only apparent, and not real, arising from a distant and superficial survey of the matter, and, consequently, will vanish away upon a closer inspection : for, let any one but examine the point with proper attention, and he will find these *Variation of Initials* conducted by express and definitive Rules; and founded upon a judicious and laudable principle, namely, that of smoothing the pronunciation of the Language, and thereby rendering the Reading of it easier, more melodious and agreeable. Nor yet is this altogether appropriate to the *Welsh* ; for we find in the *Hebrew* a parallel to this, as far as it goes, but not so extensible, in those

fix Letters of the Alphabet called by the Gram-
 marians *Begadkephath*, which have an *attenuated*,
 or an *aspirated*, sound, as they are, or are not,
 marked with the point, *Dagesh*. In the *Greek*
 too we find something analogous to this ; name-
 ly, in those Consonants called *Mutes*, which
 change their sounds from the *hard* to the *soft*,
 and thence to the *aspirate*, and yet, in every
 Variation, retain an evident alliance with each
 other ; and instances of this I might give in the
 Characteristics of Greek Verbs, but that I deem
 it unnecessary, since the point hath been so late-
 ly illustrated by the learned and ingenious *Dr.*
Llewelyn with a happiness and facility peculiar
 to himself.

It may not be improper here to remark,
 that, in the Change of Initials in the *Welsh*
 Language, the strictest regularity is always
 observed : for this change is never admitted,
 but between Letters of the same organ ; so that
dentals are never changed into *labials*, nor *labials*
 into *dentals* ; &c.

In those celebrated Languages of Antiqui-
 ty, the *Greek* and *Latin*, the terminations of
 words

words were generally affected by *preceding* parts of speech ; so that the *agent*, in that case, acted at some distance : but in the *Cambro-British* Language, a *foregoing* word acts for the most part, with an immediate influence upon the *initial* Letter of the *subsequent* ; which, in my opinion, is more natural.

Whosoever would know more of this matter, let him consult *Dr. Davies's* Grammar, or *Gambold's*, or *Richards's* prefixed to his Dictionary ; and let him bestow but half the attention, upon any one of these, that is requisite in order to attain a competent skill in either the *Latin* or *Greek* Grammar ; then, if he can, let him with-hold his approbation from, and refuse his assent to, what hath been here advanced with regard to the perfection of the Grammar of the *Welsh* Tongue. But if any one should be so prejudiced against the Language, as to be obstinately deaf to what-ever argument may be produced in it's favour ; and should take up this Pamphlet with a determined resolution not to be convinced by any reason it may contain ; let such know that it was never intended for his perusal.

I come

I come now to make some Observations on the Poetry of the *Ancient Britons*, whose “ language seems to be particularly adapted for poetry,” says an ingenious Author whom few will accuse of partiality to it; for, when he hath with no little pains, and some taste, erected a kind of Pillar in honour of it, he applieth his pick-ax with so much dexterity to the foundation, that with a single stroke he lays it level with the ground. On the side of Praise, he mentions so many articles as it’s indisputable property, that, being added together, form a very considerable aggregate in it’s favour: but he never fails to set down such particulars on the other side, as will, upon their being summed up and the necessary deduction made, exhibit a clear ballance against it. “ It’s variety (i. e. of the *Welsh* language), copiousness, and even harmony, is to be equalled by few, perhaps excelled by none;” says this *elegant* Writer, in a fit of good humour. And again; --- “ This language, --- however extraordinary it may seem to some, on account of the multiplicity of gutturals and consonants with which it abounds, has the softness and harmony of the *Italian*,
with

with the majesty and expression of the *Greek*." Handsomely (and, if I know any thing of the matter, *justly*) say'd! But, is there not a palpable inconsistency between these encomiums, and what follows at no great distance: --- "The poets (says he), or such as pretend to be such, arrogate to themselves a most unwarrantable poetical licence of coining words, for the sake of sound; and this they will seldom scruple to do, whenever they want a word for rhyme. Hence the greatest part of their poetry, is nothing more than melodious nonsense, a perfect jargon of harmonious sounds. And when translated, scarce reducible to common sense. This unbounded poetical licence, though generally, yet, is not universally adopted. For there are not wanting many poets, who seldom claim this unwarrantable prerogative of coining words *ad libitum*."

Any one (tho' ever so great a stranger to the language and it's poetry,) that reads the above-cited passages with proper attention, must perceive that the former ones clash with the latter; if not in direct terms, yet
certainly

certainly by necessary consequence : or at least, that it is very improbable, and next to impossible, that the latter assertion should be true, if the former ones are so. What, in the name of Reason and Common-sense, should induce the poets to set about coining words, which they knew could be of no value, as having no meaning ; when a language, copious, harmonious and expressive as the *Welsh* is represented to be, display'd it's stores, and submitted to their choice a boundless variety of words of known significations, and established authority ? If, in reading the Works of our venerable Bards, we happen to meet with a few words whose meaning cannot at this day, perhaps, be clearly ascertained ; are we, from this accidental ignorance of our's, immediately to conclude that they were coined, for the sake of rhyme, by those bards, in whose works we happen to find them ? We might as often as we, in reading the *Greek* and *Latin* Classics, stumble on a word whose meaning hath been obscured by the rust of Antiquity, with equal reason infer that the Writer, who useth it, was the coiner thereof ; and that he minted it
for

for the sole purpose of making out the Verse, without regarding in the least whether it had any meaning at all or no. The inference, unless I am greatly mistaken, would be equally wise, natural and judicious in both cases.

I am really at a loss to account for the motive, that could induce a Writer of distinguished talents so dis-ingenuously to satirize the *Welsh* nation; for I cannot possibly consider *The Letters from Snowdon* in any other light, than that of a *masked* Satire.

Let the Author of these *Letters* enjoy, *if he can*, the secret pleasure that ariseth in the honest Author's breast from the consciousness of his having done justice to his Subject, in treating it with faithfulness and sincerity.

The Bards have been always considered by the *Cambro-Britons*, and deservedly too, as the guardians of their Language and conservators of it's purity. In this light they were view'd by the celebrated Dr. *Davies*, as is evident from his
 having

having chosen, in the compilation of his Dictionary, to rely *chiefly* on their authority: and this he might very safely venture to do, since he well knew (as appears from the Preface to his Grammar) that their old Laws expressly forbade the Bards to introduce any new words into their compositions. But enough of this; and, indeed I am glad to have finished the task of refutation, which I entered upon not without some degree of reluctance.

The *Welsh*, in the structure of it's Poetry, is widely different from all other languages both ancient and modern: for here-in we may observe such a peculiar ingenuity in the selection and arrangement of words, as to produce a rhythmical concatenation of sounds in every verse; which concatenation is so characteristic of, and essential to *Welsh* poetry, that, exclusive of this, it could have no existence. With regard to the texture and versification of their poems, no bards, in any language, ever surpass'd the *Welsh*; or even equal'd them, if we may depend in this case on the judgment of *Edmund Pryse*, Archdeacon of *Merioneth*, who

was as well acquainted as any man living with the rules and genius of *Welsh* poetry ; and whose talents, as a *Latin* poet, appear by no means contemptible from the specimen we have of them in a Copy of verses, written by him when he was eighty years of age, and which may be seen prefix'd to Dr *Davies's* Grammar. On the poetry of his native country, his words are ;

*“ Ni phrofais, dan ffurfafen,
Gwe mor gaeth a'r Gymraeg wen.”*

Which may be thus English'd,

*Of all the tissues ever wrought
On the Parnassian hill,
Fair Cambria's web, in art and thought,
Displays the greatest skill.*

The laws of poetical composition in this language are so strict and rigorous, that they must greatly cramp the genius of the bard, but that there is, in the language itself, a particular aptitude for that kind of alliteration and jingle, which constitutes the beauty of it's poetry.

The

The English reader may perhaps be able to form some *faint* idea, some *imperfect* notion of the singularity of the *Welsh* language in the formation or construction of it's poetical numbers, from the following stanza on *Envy*; viz.

“ A Fiend in Phæbus' fane he found
That yonder grew, yet under ground,
Sprung from the spawn of Spite;
The Elf his spleen durst not display,
Nor act the devil in the day,
But at the noon of night.”

I would not here be understood as if I intimated that there was the least similarity in the form of the stanza, but only in the structure of the verse. For tho', with regard to the former, the *Cambro-British* Muse hath, at the instance of her votaries, condescended to put on various other garbs, where-in she hath appeared not only not ungraceful, but even with some degree of dignity and ease; yet the robes she hath ever gloried in are the *Twenty-four* celebrated *ancient British Metres*, unknown to every Muse besides, and where-in she hath always shone with unrival'd

lustre in native Majesty confest. Some, from a very slight acquaintance with the *Welsh* language have magisterially pronounced it to be harsh, rugged, and incapable of expressing soft and melodious sounds : but to be convinced of the falseness of the assertion one need only read the following couplet, which was written on a *Harp* ; viz.

“ Mae mîl o leisiau meluson,
Mal mêl o hyd ym mola hon.

I despair of being able to convey the mellifluence of these lines into any other language, but, I believe, the sense will be found to be pretty nearly expressed in this distich, viz.

Within the concave of it's womb is found
The magic scale of soul-enchancing sound.

The *Greek* and *Latin* poets, especially *Homer* and *Virgil*, have been greatly admired for their singular skill in adapting the *sound* to, and making it expressive of, the nature of the thing they described ; thus dexterously varying their
Numbers

Numbers with the varying Theme, and ever accommodating their words to the Subject with the nicest taste and discernment. Various instances of this have been produced; some of which, it must be acknowledged, carry their evidence along with them; while others seem to depend, for this particular beauty attributed to them, entirely on the imagination of the critic. But it may be justly say'd that no Poets ever display'd greater masterliness, in this respect, than the *Welsh*; nor was there ever a language, more happily calculated than theirs for the exhibition of this beauty, in all it's variety and extent. There is nothing in Nature more awfully grand and majestic than the sound of thunder: and yet I believe, I may safely venture to appeal to the ears of the reader, for the truth of the remark I am going to make; namely, That the sound is, with an amazing happiness, made an *echo* to, and, as it were, a *picture* of the sense in the following distich;

“ Tân a dŵr yn ymŵriaw,
Yw'r taranau dreigiau draw.”

Eng-

The roaring thunder, dreadful in it's ire,
Is water warring with aerial fire.

In order to justify my remark, I might here proceed to analyze the quotation; point out the frequent repetition of the § *canine letter*, the most expressive of a hoarse and rumbling sound of any in the Language; take notice of the concurrence and assemblage of the most broad-sounding vowels, the most broad-sounding diphthongs, &c. - - - but I have lodged my appeal with the reader, and, as I have no reason to distrust either his judgment or his candour, have no desire to withdraw it.

When a Language deals largely in circumlocutions, and makes use of a multiplicity of words for the conveyance of it's sentiments, it is a sure sign of it's native debility and scantiness of expression: for we may observe in this, as well as in some other cases, that they, who can the least afford it, are the most lavish and profuse. But the glory of a Language is an expressive

§ i. e. R. ---- *sonat heic de nare canina*
Litera -----

PERSIUS.

expressive brevity, and a perspicuous conciseness; and of this, a thousand happy instances might be produced out of the Works of the *Cambro-British* Bards. Judge of the rest by the following specimen; *viz.*

“ Gwŷr a wnâ gŵr yn ŵrol,
Gŵr a wnâ gwŷr yn ei ôl.”

Englified,

Brave men with bravery will their leaders fire,
Brave chiefs their men with bravery will inspire.

If these few cursory and superficial remarks, and such as are by no means worthy of the Subject, should yet have the good fortune so far to excite the curiosity of any person of taste and judgment, as to engage him in the study of the Language and it's Poetry; I dare undertake that he shall have no reason in the sequel to think his time mis-employ'd, or regret the pains he shall have bestowed upon the pursuit: for here he will find the most melodious numbers, the most poetical diction, the most nervous expression, and the most elevated
sen-

sentiments, to be met with in any language, whether ancient or modern ; and if any of, or all, these be the student's object, he cannot possibly be here disappointed.

It is pretended by those, that are no friends to the *Welsh* Language, that there is nothing extant in it, that is worthy of the perusal and attention of the gentleman and the man of letters. The answer probably will, as it justly may, be, that there is at this day in print an excellent *Body of Laws* originally written in the language, and published under the sanction of the highest authority in those days ; viz. The Laws of *Howel Dda*. " A perfect Chaos," replies the Objector, who, you may safely conclude, never spent an hour in the examination of them ; perhaps, never *saw* them in his life. It would be quite idle to offer any thing by way of argument, in favour of them, to a person of this temper ; I shall therefore detain him no longer than while I observe that the *learned* Dr. *Wotton* was of a different way of thinking ; who, having acquired a critical skill in the language,

thought

thought it worth his while to bestow an excellent *Latin* translation with notes upon these laws, though, to the great regret of the Commonwealth of learning, he did not live to publish these fruits of his labour and study ; but the loss was happily supplied, in this particular, by the *Rev. and learned* Mr. *William Clarke*, who has favoured the Public with an elegant edition of these, introduced by an excellent Preface of his own.

We have the *Bible*, that system of divine truth, in this language, being translated into it by persons eminently learned and pious, who, as appears from the translation, were unbiassed by preconceived notions and opinions, uninfluenced by bigotry, and untinctured with the frenzy of wild enthusiasm ; who upon this occasion, as well as upon all others, learned from the Holy Scriptures to “ speak the words of soberness and truth.” Here, as far as I am capable of judging, are no perversions of texts for the unworthy purposes of supporting absurd and impious tenets, the shocking inventions

of gloomy fatalists, and the wayward whimsies of disordered brains. This translation is remarkable for the purity of the language, and a native simplicity of style which so eminently characterises the Original : for it hath been observed by the skilful in both languages, that there is a surprizing affinity between the *Hebrew* and the *Ancient British* in their idioms, peculiarities of style, and mode or turn of Expression.

There is an original Composition in the *Welsh* Language entitled --- *Y Bardd Cwsg*, i. e. The Visionary Bard --- consisting of three Visions, viz. The Vision of the *World* ; the Vision of *Death* ; and the Vision of *Hell*. This is a species of Satire, partly literal but mostly allegorical, wherein Vice, Folly, and Vanity are lashed in a very masterly manner, being drawn in the most hideous (i. e. their most proper) forms, and represented in all the sad variety of Woe. In this performance are the boldest and most poetical Personifications, the liveliest and most animated Descriptions, and the noblest Flights of Imagination any where to be met with in
either

either prose or verse. *Don Quevedo's* Visions deserve by no means to be named with these, as will be perceived and acknowledged by any one that will but compare them together, tho' ever so superficially. I have hear'd of a person that was so much in love with *Don Quixot*, that he took the pains to learn the *Spanish* language, in order to have the pleasure to read his favourite author in the original. I should not at all wonder if many were to learn the *Welsh* language, that they might be able to read the *Bardd Cwsg*, could they but once form an idea of it's excellence.

I might here proceed to specify some Historians of credit ; some Bards of renown, *Phæbus's* undoubted Sons ; some Relics of Antiquity, that have hitherto escaped the devouring jaws of Time, which are still extant in the *Welsh* language, some in print and some in manuscript : but I am persuaded that what hath been already produced is abundantly sufficient to awaken the attention of the Curious and Candid ; and as to those of a different disposition,

I might

I might almost as well attempt to raise the dead, as to rouse them out of their lethargy, and engage them to lend an attentive ear to any thing that happens to thwart their Prejudices.

There are some even among the sons of *Cambria* (but they are *degenerate* sons), that have conceived such an unaccountable dislike and aversion to their *mother* tongue---their *native* language, ----- that they have not scrupled to wish it exterminated, and every memorial of it erased from off the face of the Earth! But is it possible that *these* should be descended from the *Ancient Britons*? It cannot be. No; --- It cannot be. *These* certainly must be the offspring of aliens (*Normans, Flemings, &c*) that have by intrusion formerly got footing in the country. To be a passive and unconcerned spectator of (tho' one should not proceed so far as to be aiding and active in) the extirpation of the language of one's Ancestors, betrays a tameness of spirit, and a servility of disposition, by no means becoming a Gentleman, or one that hath any ancestry to boast of. Whether a few
mercenary

mercenary Tradesmen, a few triking Drovers, &c. may, or may not be something incommoded by the existence of more langages than one at a time in a Nation, is an enquiry of too little importance to employ the serious thoughts of the Cultivators of language and literature: for, the particular advantage of such individuals is an object not worth the care of the liberal and enlarged Mind, when that comes in competition with more interesting considerations, namely, the concerns, both temporal and spiritual, of a numerous People.

It may be observed that they, who, being *Welshmen* by birth, have lately commenced *Englishmen*, and either have, or pretend to have, forgot their mother tongue, are generally the most rancorous against it, in order, I suppose, to manifest their affection for that which they espoused. And herein they imitate turn-coats in religion, especially Protestants that revolt to the Roman Catholics, who, in order to shew their zeal for the Church they have adopted,

ed, generally persecute that which they have deserted.

It is highly absurd, and little short of madness, for any one to pretend to treat of the Antiquities of Britain without an acquaintance with, or a competent skill in the *Ancient British* Language; for, without this, no extent of learning, --- no industry of research, --- no critical sagacity, will ever be able to preserve the *British* Antiquary from committing, in every page, the most ridiculous blunders; whereof a proper judge may at any time find instances enough to provoke him to the exercise of either his risible, or indignant faculties, as he happens to be in the humour. I would defy even a *Diogenes* with all his gravity and all his furliness, provided he were but sufficiently acquainted with the *Cambro-British* Tongue, to withhold the smile at the perusal of etymologies of the names of cities, towns, castles, &c. in Britain, ineptly given by English Antiquaries through want of skill in the original language of the
Country

Country, though, in other respects, learned and ingenious men.

What I have here advanced are my real and undissembled sentiments, offered as a sacrifice to Truth, and not proceeding from a censorious principle, pique, spleen, or any other unworthy motive or influence whatsoever.

I am now preparing to take my leave of my subject, and, for the present, to bid the reader adieu ; having discharged (imperfectly, I confess, yet to the best of my ability) what I conceived to be a part of my duty to my mother tongue, and pay'd a small tribute to the pre-eminence of my native language. I shall not hesitate to profess to the world, that I prefer *this* to any of the languages ancient or modern, that I have any acquaintance with ; that it is a language which I greatly admire, "*cujus amor mihi crescit in horas,*" and for which my affection encreases every hour ! Nor would I have the reader by any means imagine, that this preference springs from blind prepossession,

sion, or undiscerning partiality ; no, but from the best and most impartial judgment, that I have been able to form of the comparative merit of this language, when I had spent many of the best years of my life in the investigation and study of it.



Rescriptum

Rescriptum * *Edmundi Prifei* senis
 octogenarii, Archidiaconi Meir-
 ion. in approbationem operis.

E*N* duo præclari linguam renovare vetustam
 Conati, Senensis et Oxoniensis alumni :
Ambo Joannes dicti, Davisij et ambo,
Doctores ambo, et patrio sermone periti.
Corporis is medicus, medicus cælestis at alter.
Fecit uterque sua progressus arte venustos.
Mitibus a Cambris merito redamandus uterque est.

Ille, peregrinis multum versatus in oris,
Antiquam calami mutat Cambrogena formam.
Ille memor patriæ, sed originis immemor, almæ
Ille memor linguæ, sed carminis immemor. Unde
Cæcos ille duces imitatus non videt album.
Velle suum laudamus, et amplexamur amorem.

I

Hic

* See PAGE 50.

*Hic tamen, idque domi, multo vigilantior: imo
Ima petit, suprema petit, studioque profundo
Hebræos fontes, tumidos simul Helladis amnes
ausit, et inde suos jussit potare Britannos.*

*Hic docet obductas tenebrarum spargere nubes,
Romani dudum quas induxere tyranni.*

*Hic docet et Cambros distincte, Grammaticæque
Verba loqui, linguæ veteris radice reperta
Hebræam ut citius valeamus discere linguam,
Et laudare Deum patrio sermone volentes
Vivamus Christo, cui gloria tota redundet.*

E N G L I S H E D.

TWO Sons of Fame with ev'ry Science
fraught,
(One taught at *Sens*, and one at *Oxford* taught,)
Exert their Skill our *Language* to restore,
That us'd by Bards in golden days of Yore.
Both these are *Doctors*, and alike in Name,
(The same their *proper*-, and their *sur*- the same,)
In *Cambria's* Tongue both knowing, blest with
Skill
The Critic's Chair with Dignity to fill.

Phy-

Physicians both ---both friends of humankind---
 One heals corporeal ills, and one the sickly mind.
 Each in his Branch a fair Proficiency shows,
 To each his Country warm Affection owes.

Tho' *Cambrian-born*, yet conversant *abroad*,
 The *first*, by daring Novelty un-aw'd,
 Attempts our ancient *Alphabet* to change,
 Our vet'ran Troops beneath new Banners range.
 Still in his Mind our Language holds a Place,
 Tho' unacquainted with it's Parent-Race ;
 His *native Tongue* is ever at his Heart,
 Tho' not well-skill'd in it's poetic Art :
 Whence he blind guides implicitly obeys,
 Still pressing on, unconscious that he strays.
 Th' Attempt we honour, and transmit to Fame ;
 We venerate his love, and glory in his name.

But in the *last*, tho' ne'er abroad, we find
 A more attentive, more discerning Mind.
 Each deep Recess of Language he explores,
 Nor rests below, but to the Summit soars.
 His much-lov'd *Cambrians* he conducts and
 brings,

By Paths direct, to *Salem's* sacred Springs ;

Points

Points out each Stream on *Grecia's* learned
 Shore,
 And bids them drink where he had drank be-
 fore.

Error's dark Night, which erst involv'd
 our *Isle*,
 (Too long the *Dupe* of *Rome's* enslaving Guile,)
 He lends us Light at once to chase away,
 And of fair Truth restore the golden Day.

He gladly deigns his Country-men to teach,
 By well-weigh'd Rules, the Rudiments of
 Speech,
 That, when the Root, first, of our *own* we gain,
 The *Hebrew* Tongue we thence may soon attain;
 That, still desirous to improve our Days,
 We, blessing God in *Cambria's* native Lays,
 May to the Saviour live, to whom be endless
 Praise.

The

The Reader of English *only* may not be displeased with the translation of the following Fragments, to be met with in the the Dissertation, where-in the sense is more attended to than the words.

The *Motto* in the Title-Page.

----- *Antiquam exquirite Matrem.* Search out your ancient Mother.

P A G E 5.

Nescire quid antequam natus sis acciderit, id est, *semper esse puerum.* To be unacquainted with the state of the world before one's own time is, *in effect*, to be always a child.

P A G E 6.

Ipse dixit. A bare assertion.

P A G E 8.

Euphoniæ gratia. For better sound's sake.

P A G E 19.

Aristarchus non videt omnia. The greatest Critic may not discover every thing.

P A G E 32.

Ex uno discite omnes. Take one example for all.

P A G E

On doit faire quelque chose pour se distinguer.

A man ought to do something to make himself known.

Sesquipedalia verba. Words of a foot and a half long; *i. e.* uncommonly long Words.

E R R A T A.

Page 5 line 10 dele *it*; p. 7. l. 13. for *ths* read *this*, and l. 14 for *this* read *the*; p. 26 l. 23. after *given* insert *Quotation comma's*; p. 33 l. 11. for *the* read *th*; p. 45 l. 24 after *abounds* insert ---; p. 46 l. 5. after *distance* instead of the colon an *interrogation*.

F I N I S.



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of the first part of the book is the history of the
the second part of the book is the history of the

PAGE 11

the third part of the book is the history of the
the fourth part of the book is the history of the

PAGE 12

the fifth part of the book is the history of the
the sixth part of the book is the history of the
the seventh part of the book is the history of the
the eighth part of the book is the history of the

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